POSTHUMAN AUNTIE & THE LONDON SCHOOL OF SOLARPUNK. ON ZEROWASTE. 2026

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Our zerowaste pillars

REFUSE
Say no to what harms all people, ecosystems, or collective futures, even when it is normalised or convenient.

REDUCE
Choose less at the source by refusing excess and unnecessary consumption.

RECYCLE
Use recycling as a last resort, recognising its limits and the labour and systems behind it.

ROT
Return organic matter to the soil through composting, honouring decay as part of life.

REMAKE
Transform (or upcycle) what already exists into something useful, meaningful, or shared.

REPAIR
Extend the life of objects by fixing rather than replacing them.

REUSE
Keep materials in circulation by using them again and again in everyday life.

REVISE
Design systems, habits, tools, and collective practices that reduce waste by default, not effort.

RESPECT
Care for what you have through regular upkeep so things last longer.

REDISTRIBUTE
Share resources, skills, and surplus within communities instead of buying new.

REMIX
Work creatively and improvise with what you have rather than seeking perfect solutions.

REST
Step back from buying, from unnecessary consumption, noise, and “productivity” to rest, reflect, and reset.

by Sally at Solarpunk UK

Why aim for zerowaste?

Zero waste is a way to remember that we are biological beings living inside biological systems. Nothing in nature produces waste. For most of human history, across the world, people lived within cycles of reuse and repair. Scraps fed the soil. Objects were shared and stayed in circulation. “Throwawayism” did not exist. Zerowaste has always been here, it has just been erased by an economic model that demands endless growth. Convenience today means disconnection to the impact of our choices. Products are shipped far away from where it will end up. Garbage is shipped abroad oiut of sight.

Going zero waste is a form of basic self-care. It does not begin with pretty wooden beige objects or perfectly labelled jars and decanted cereals. It starts with an audit of what is already in your home- what keeps appearing in the landfill bin.

You can easily adjust your own habits and systems so the lower-waste choice becomes the better one. The tastier one, the more affordable one, the more luxurious one!

Soon, very little goes to landfill and your bills shrink too. You soften. Life simplifies. There is also an immediate health aspect: Less plastic, fewer fragranced cleaners and synthetic coatings mean lower exposure to VOCs and chemical residues. Indoor air changes. What touches your skin and body changes. Zero waste often becomes a slow recalibration of what your nervous and immune system are dealing with day to day.

This is a shift in mindset as much as practice. You exchange the word waste for “surplus”. The question changes from “How do I get rid of this?” to “Where does this belong next?” Recycling, composting, return schemes, these still matter. But reduction comes first as recycling is a safety net and not available to everyone.

Move gently, from auditing what already exists in your home to more advanced practices like fermenting leftover veg or even your own bio-enzymes for cleaning. Zero waste is not about perfection. It is about living as if you belong to the same cycles that keep you alive.

Why veganism?

Zero waste - like veganism- is frequently mischaracterised as a consumer trend or an aesthetic lifestyle choice. In reality, it is a necessary alignment with biological constraints. As biological entities, humans are embedded within closed-loop ecological systems where matter is neither created nor destroyed, only transformed. The linear economic model—extract, produce, dispose—is fundamentally incompatible with these biological realities. Adopting zero waste principles is not about adhering to a moral hierarchy of consumption; it is about recognizing that human survival depends on integrating with, rather than extracting from, the natural systems that sustain life.
This publication advocates for vegan choices as a parallel ethical imperative regarding animal welfare and environmental impact. Consequently, this text focuses exclusively on material waste management, product lifecycle, and systemic reduction of landfill dependency, excluding dietary guidelines which are addressed separately.

Creating new habits that align with our values

Systemic Integration and Behavioral Shifts- not just bamboo stuff
Implementing zero waste practices requires moving away from retail therapy and toward systemic auditing of one's existing resources.
1. Resource Auditing Before acquiring new items, conduct a thorough inventory of current possessions. Identify unused tools, clothing, and household goods. Repurposing existing assets reduces immediate demand for new production and highlights gaps that truly need filling. This step counters the psychological impulse to solve problems through purchase.
2. Reframing Surplus Shift the conceptual framework from "waste" to "surplus." Materials deemed useless in one context often possess utility in another. Food scraps become compost; textile fragments become insulation or cleaning cloths; broken items yield functional components. This mindset encourages creativity and resourcefulness, transforming perceived trash into valuable inputs for other processes.

Habitual Systemss
Sustainable behavior is most effective when systematised. Establish default routines that minimize decision fatigue: carrying reusable containers, maintaining a basic repair kit, and setting up efficient sorting stations for recycling and composting. When ethical choices become automatic, they require less cognitive effort and are more likely to persist long-term.
4. Pragmatic Progression Perfection is neither achievable nor necessary. Zero waste is a trajectory of continuous improvement, not a binary state of success or failure. Small reductions in landfill contribution accumulate into significant environmental benefits over time. Starting with manageable changes—such as eliminating single-use plastics or repairing one item per month—builds competence and confidence without inducing burnout.
Ultimately, zero waste is an act of self-maintenance and ecological responsibility. It conserves financial resources by reducing unnecessary expenditure and preserves planetary health by minimizing toxicity and resource depletion. It is a practical application of the principle that we are part of nature, not separate from it.**

From waste to surplus, from scarcity to abundance

From waste to surplus, from scarcity to abundance — change starts with how we see the world. Consume less and live more! Live your slogans! Spend your time where it matters: with friends, stirring pots, sharing new vegan dishes, making art and music, laughing until it feels like medicine. Life expands when we stop grasping and start sharing; when we realise that enough was already here, waiting for us to notice.

The Landfill Problem and Environmental Toxicity

One of the main objectives of zero waste is the reduction of materials sent to landfill. Landfills are not merely storage facilities; they are active sites of environmental degradation. Organic matter decomposing anaerobically generates methane, a potent greenhouse gas with a global warming potential significantly higher than carbon dioxide over short timeframes. Furthermore, landfills act as leaching grounds for toxic chemicals, heavy metals, and synthetic compounds that infiltrate groundwater and soil ecosystems.
Plastic pollution represents a critical failure of modern material science. Microplastics have permeated every layer of the biosphere, from deep-ocean trenches to human bloodstreams and placental tissue. The persistence of plastic waste necessitates a shift away from single-use polymers toward durable, biodegradable, or infinitely recyclable materials. Consumer demand serves as a regulatory force; by refusing products with excessive packaging or non-recyclable components, individuals exert pressure on corporations to redesign supply chains and eliminate hazardous materials.

Why zerowaste and BDS?

Waste isn't only what we throw away – it's the surplus produced by systems that extract, pollute, surveil and erase. Talking about "zero waste" without naming who is harmed in the making of things is just managing appearances. This is where BDS comes in. Founded by Palestinians, BDS is a refusal to support companies doing systemic harm to people, land, water, food systems and our shared future.

Opting out is the least we can do. It's an attempt not to participate in violence when participation is optional – and it isn't always, which is why privilege must be acknowledged. But we can still learn where our money goes.

Zero waste without BDS becomes green consumerism: soothing, but compatible with exploitation, occupation and ecological collapse. BDS without attention to consumption misses how harm is normalised through everyday shopping. Together, they show the fuller picture of our choices.

We are told individual actions don't matter. Don't listen. Corporations watch their brand value; silence is consent. Refusal disrupts legitimacy. In a time of ecological breakdown and ongoing colonial violence, choosing not to support harmful systems is one small but necessary act for our collective future.

Design Philosophy: Repairability and Ethical Tech

Zero waste extends beyond disposal habits to encompass production design. It challenges the industry standard of planned obsolescence—the deliberate engineering of products to have a limited useful life—and built-in obsolescence, where repair is economically or technically discouraged. Instead, it promotes "right-to-repair" principles and modular design, ensuring that goods can be maintained, upgraded, and extended in lifespan.

This philosophy applies equally to technology. Ethical tech prioritizes devices that are durable, repairable by users or independent technicians, and manufactured under fair labor conditions. It rejects the disposable culture of rapid hardware turnover, advocating instead for longevity and resource efficiency. By choosing repairable electronics and supporting companies that honor warranty rights and provide spare parts, consumers support an economy based on stewardship rather than extraction.

Refurbished or Fairphone?

From wasted to wanted

CHAPTER 1:
Planning

Planning

Meal planning saves time and money
Buying in bulk- bicarbonate of soda, rice
Local seasonal food tastes better!
Planning for leftovers
Kitchen Systems
Regrowing & reusing scraps
The Fridge & Freezer
Slowing down waste
Recycling for real
Food is medicine
Batch cooking

On the emotional archives of charity shops

Charity shops are
Archives
Museums of the everyday
imagined hisstories
optimistic lifecycles
Little cinemas
I sift through a basket of souvenir scarves
Costa Dorada, Paris, Palermo...
And seaside towns I will never visit
A piece of lace, a teatowel, a Pez dispenser!
A patchwork blanket, a silver ring...
A set of bowls for TV dinners
A sweater, softened by years of washing
A fragrance
A book, a wind chime
A biscuit tin of buttons
A cup that knows how to hold warmth
A linen dress, for a body smaller than mine
Too bad
A flowerpot
An unused notebook
A pair of jeans

auntie, may 2026

CHAPTER 2:
Kitchen essentials

Spice cupboard
zerowaste stock
Juicing veg
Smoothies
lifechanging bread
Scandinavian crispbread
For the love of congee
Japananese breakfast
Chia pudding
Homemade granola
Egg free pancake mix
Chapati
A rice for every occasion
Nutritious Millet
All about dumplings

Zerowaste stock

Composting

EGG SHELLS
Important to put all the calcium back and not send it to landfill!
#pleasecompost

For the love of tea

Gangnam style; Korean fruit teas
Growing your own teas
The life-saving properties of ginger
A tea for every occasion

Bioenzymes

You basically collect citrus waste and Keep it submerged in water for 3 months. You can add some sugar to speed up process. You do the same with apple waste but that's much quicker no oils to come out. You can add a bit of raw unpasteurised apple cider vinegar as a starter but it's not necessary. I use three glass jars just in the counter but then I empty them into large plastic buckets with lids that I got for free from a Pizzaria. Every 3-6 months I strain it and Bottle it. We put it in spray bottles and even use it to clean the toilet!

Citrus bio enzyme household cleaner

Make your own waste citrus bio enzyme by combining citrus skins, sugar and water. Use a clean plastic bucket with an air tight lid or plastic bottle to store. Release has now and then. The orange skin oils enzyme is ready to be used in 3 months. You can speed up the process by adding some yeast. You can use it earlier when it starts fizzing but wait 3 Months for the nice smell.

CHAPTER 3:
Storage & organisation

Organising the fridge
Storing vegetables so they last
Shopping from the kitchen
Saving scraps for Zerowaste stock
Pells & rinds
Food Prep; Cleaning veg, soaking, etc
Dried goods cupboard
Pantry basics: spice is nice
Flexible zero-waste vegan meals
From root to leaf
Fermented foods

Korean style teas

CHAPTER 4:
Clothing

e.g.
Fragrance-free & envionmentally friendly laundry detergent
Adjusting off the peg second hand clothes
Upcycling garments
Sashiko 刺し子
Embroidery
Wool isn't vegan but neither are microfibres
The cost of fast fashion

CHAPTER 5:
Cleaning

e.g.
Making your own bioenzymes
Buying bicarb by bulk
White vinegar
Ditching paper towels
Pest control
All about stains
Frequency chart

CHAPTER 5:
Growing food indoors

e.g.
Windowsill growing
Regrowing & reusing scraps
Forgaging
Raised beds
Allotments
Seed & plant swops
Edible houseplants

Dehydrating spring onions

Microgreens and shoots

CHAPTER 6:
Personal care

e.g.
Quitting deos
Going No poo
Fragrance Free Living
Home Apothecary
DIY Cosmetics
On teas and tinctures; Why say no to essential oils
Plastic-free periods
Cups and lube
Moon balm

The Extractive Myth of Essential Oils

We must dismantle the romanticisation of amber glass bottles. In our zeal to reject synthetic plastics, many have inadvertently swapped one form of exploitation for another: the industrial extraction of essential oils. These are not merely "plant juice"; they are concentrated chemical extracts demanding astronomical inputs of land, water, and energy. To produce a single pound of rose oil requires approximately 10,000 pounds of petals; lemon oil demands 1,500 lemons. For high-yield crops like peppermint, 98% of the biomass becomes waste. We are purchasing scent at the cost of immense ecological depletion.

The sourcing methods are equally problematic. Wild harvesting leads to overexploitation—sandalwood trees are uprooted after decades of growth, and frankincense trees are slashed to death. Conversely, industrial monocultures devastate biodiversity, deplete soil nutrients, and rely on agrochemicals. Furthermore, the supply chain is globally fragmented: an Australian tea tree oil may be distilled in China, bottled in France, and shipped to the UK, accruing significant carbon emissions at every stage. The recyclable glass vessel does not absolve the extractive violence contained within it.

Instead, we must return to locality and simplicity. Hydrosols and tinctures offer aromatic benefits with a fraction of the resource intensity. Dried herbs steeped in carrier oils provide therapeutic value without industrial processing, allowing the spent plant matter to be composted. Tinctures preserve medicinal properties efficiently through alcohol or vinegar infusion. Most radically, we should embrace fragrance-free living, recognising that our dependence on scent is a capitalist conditioning. By forgoing these luxury extracts, we recalibrate our senses to the natural world—rain, soil, skin—and refuse to participate in an industry built on scarcity and extraction. True sustainability lies not in the purity of the bottle, but in the simplicity of the practice.

Your home apothecary

Anti inflammatory diet
Medicinal foods
Things worth buying at your Asian store
Basic medicine cabinet

CHAPTER 6:
Out and about

e.g.
Being prepared:
Tote bag essentials
Meals
Drinks
Picnics
Snacks

CHAPTER 6:
Decolonising veganism

Why veganism needs decolonising
Veganism beyond white, Western narratives
Access, disability, and survival
Food, land, and who gets to be vegan
Zero waste veganism without classism or purity politics
Relational ethics with more-than-human life
Indigenous food sovereignty (we are not forcing western veganism on indigenous people)
Local futures; seasonal, situational ethics

CHAPTER 6:
Animal companions

Zerowaste pets and care
Homemade dog food
Homemade flea powder

CHAPTER 7:
Craftiness

e.g.
Saving and making paper greeting cards, Wrapping paper
Art for walls
T-shirts
Screenprinting
Upcycling furniture
Reupholstering
Sentimental patchwork

CHAPTER 8:
Gardens & foraging

One straw revolution
A packet of seeds
Edible weeds
Feeding the soil
Weed fertiliser

TACK!.0

Good shit

Some resources

Lexicon

Please share!

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